

Chapter1: IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership has its own prominence be it in business, in spirituality, in politics, in defense, or in any field one could think of. Put in simple terms, leadership is about alignment of thought or action of a group for a cause. It is about taking charge and influencing others to follow your vision.

Leadership is an art that cannot be taught through book reading or classroom sessions. It has to be developed by observing leaders around us, by self learning, by learning from others and by application.

This book makes an attempt to understand leadership the Ramayana way. Ramayana is the most sacred epic for Hindus. It is one of the best examples of Hinduism through story telling. This epic also throws much light on leadership skills and interestingly these skills are relevant to present day context and they will also be relevant to future context. Ramayana epic implicitly explains the leadership qualities. This book takes inspiration from the epic and attempts to highlight leadership skills of various characters that appear in the epic. This book deals with leadership in general and business leadership in particular.

Although the Ramayana is a Hindu epic, this book in your hand does not deal with religion but it adopts leadership examples from Ramayana. While Rama gives examples on how a leader should be, Ravana gives examples on how a leader should not be. When you consider Rama an ordinary person, you get to learn lot of noble qualities from him.

In this book **bold and underlined** parts represent sections in a chapter and *italicized and underlined* parts represent sub-sections in a chapter.

The Appendix contains list of characters from Ramayana that appear in this book.

The following leadership skills are covered in this book-

- Career skills
- People skills
- Technical skills

Career skills are important in ensuring proper career growth. Leader will have to plan his career growth and also have to help his team's career growth. This is important from organization's perspective as the team's development will have a direct impact on the organization's growth.

In career skills, the book focuses on career management, attitude, and personality management. Attitude is all about managing ourselves and managing our relations with others. Career management is all about how to choose an organization that suits our career aspirations and how to align to our organization's goal to build up career. Personality management is about

managing habits and introducing relaxation techniques in our daily routine to make an effective living.

People skills are important as we all deal with people day in and day out. Different people have different perspectives so basics of general human psychology will be useful in understanding people. The book mainly focuses on - hiring skills (how to hire people), Motivation skills (how to motivate others), Knowledge sharing, Team management, Selling skills, Delegating (the art of making others work for us), Managing expectations (how to meet and set expectations for others), Smart way of saying no, Conflict management (smart ways of handling conflicts) and finally on Feedback (taking feedback and giving feedback to others).

Technical skills include skills that are required to develop other skills related to career building and people management. The following are the technical skills that are covered in this book.

Observation, problem solving, creativity and innovation, competitive, risk management, task management, decision making, goal management, assumption making, process management, time management, learning, analytical, communication, crisis, energy conservation and vision management.

Exercises and tips under each section will help reader to master leadership skills through self-learning.

Chapter2: CAREER SKILLS

Career skills are the set of skills required to boost up your career. One can become a leader without improving these skills but then one's career could get stagnant without these necessary skills. This chapter focuses on attitude, relaxation & stress management, habit management, health management and career management.

Developing right attitude

In simple terms positive attitude is the right attitude.

Determination

Most of us give a great start but fade off the firmness of purpose. But a leader cannot do so and have to possess unflinching determination and unfailing memory that is because every small step that a leader takes highly influences all stakeholders directly or indirectly.

Determination is a state of mind in which mind holds the task till the completion of it. Below is an example on determination explaining how Viswamitra received highest ranking among all sages of his time.

This is one of the stories told to Rama about Maharshi Viswamitra. Viswamitra before becoming a sage was a king. He once went to forest along with his army to hunt wild animals. After hunting for sometime he went to Maharshi Vasista's ashramam located in the same forest, he was greeted well and then treated well with delicious food. Viswamitra learnt that Vasista had a cow called Kamadhenu which had magical powers. The cow was the one that created delicious food. Being a king Viswamitra wanted to gain the cow and make it his property for which Vasista did not agree. Viswamitra then commanded his army to destroy the place but was badly defeated by army generated by Kamadhenu. Viswamitra felt insulted and determined to become equal to Vasistha in rank, the Brahmarsi. He gave away his kingdom and started living in forest to perform severe austerities. He meditated for several years to acquire brahmical powers. In the mean course he got distracted once by Trisanku who requested for entry in heaven, second time by Menaka who was sent by Indra to distract Viswamitra and third time by Rambha whom Viswamitra cursed out of anger. But then he realized his mistakes and trained his mind to keep away from distractions and meditated again for several years and at last pleased Brahma to get the rank of Brahmarsi.

Positive determination can change lives to good. Here is an example of Rama's positive determination in keeping his vow to please his parents, at all times, as a token of gratitude to parenthood.

Upon receiving orders from his father, Rama decided to leave for 14 years of forest life. It was his step mother Kaikeyi's idea that Rama leaves Ayodhya. Lakshmana got outraged hearing this and started cursing Kaikeyi. But Rama was determined to accept his parents' orders and instructed Lakshmana not to curse their step-mother. Rama had no desire for kingdom for his only determination was to follow dharma and religiously please his parents. This result was that he stood as the best example, to the mankind, of nobility.

At times we decide strongly to complete a task and even pursue it, but we give up because of loss of hope. Most of us loose hope when we are very close to success but never realize it. We invest all our time, energies but everything in vain. So when you are sure you want to achieve something then don't give up and struggle until you succeed in your goal.

Some of us may be giving up due to adversity. The best way to overcome adversity is to face it boldly. How you handle adversity is critical to your success in business & in life. Rama's story teaches us this lesson thus –

After Sita was kidnapped by Ravana in Rama & Lakshmana's absence, Rama & Lakshmana started rigorously searching for her in forest. They could not find her and all their search was in vain; Rama lost all hope! Lakshmana then admonished Rama upon which Rama gave up depression and then both resumed the search. How Rama kept his oath of rescuing Sita is all about rest of the epic. Had Rama been grief stricken and lost all hope, he would never have got Sita back!

Here is another example of unwavering determination exhibited by Hanuman in finding out Sita.

Hanuman was in charge of search for Sita in the Southward direction. He knew that Sita was most likely captured in Lanka so he made the toughest airborne journey over the sea and reached there to search for Sita in all directions. He searched entire Lanka several times but in vain. He was thoroughly disappointed, tired and started assuming misfortune for Sita and was worried about his mission's failure. But deep within his heart he was strongly determined to meet her and only then return to Rama. And he did it! He met Sita, gave her Rama's message, went back to Rama to convey Sita's message in return. Everyone in the monkey's army along with Rama & Lakshmana appreciated Hanuman's accomplishment.

When we start with a new task, we would be doing so with lot of unknowns. It is our own will power that can lead us through hardships towards task completion. Will power arranges all that you need to succeed!

In the historical war between Rama and Ravana, a huge monkey's mob was on Rama's side while Ravana had a strong army of demons. The demons were powerful, well trained, well organized, well equipped with sophisticated weapons & safeguards and most importantly they were on their own land. But monkeys were not so powerful, had no weapons and, had to counteract using trees, stones and their claws, teeth. Yet the monkeys had strong will power to fight for Rama and thereby won the war at last.

At one stage you may lose your position, money etc but if you keep up your attitude you will regain it all back. Many rich people even if lose money regain it in a short period of time as they have the right attitude towards money. Here is an example on attitude that Rama gives by regaining his stamina, during the war, immediately after being severely assaulted by Indrajit.

During the war between Rama and Ravana, Indrajit, Ravana's son assaulted Rama & Lakshmana and wounded them all over the body. Rama & Lakshmana lost all their physical and mental stamina, and even lost all their weapons. Seeing this, the monkeys became despondent. Indrajit assumed Rama's death and left to his palace. But after sometime Rama regained all his strength, later saved Lakshmana and resumed the war. Rama had the right attitude towards victory and so it was not difficult for him to regain all his power to fight back.

The longer you stay committed towards your goals, the more momentum you will build and the greater the rewards will be. Commitment should get amalgamated with consistency in hard work and smart thinking so as to succeed.

During the war between Rama and Ravana, Rama's army had to counteract millions of powerful demons lead by hundreds of Ravana's army chiefs. To win the war the monkey army had to consistently outstand each time. They had to play different strategies to defeat different groups of demons. Monkeys had no time to relax or even have food & water they had only one mission in mind, Rama's victory! Strong determination for a strong cause made monkeys win over powerful demons.

In the same context of the war, Atikaya, a monstrous demon and son of Ravana, attacked the monkey mob. Atikaya was very powerful and unconquerable, and so the monkey mob could not stop him. He then attacked Lakshmana who was merely a youngster and less powerful, less experienced than Atikaya. But Lakshmana's inner urge made him strong and fiercely. He fought Atikaya with vigilance and trembled Atikaya violently. Atikaya was left astonished at Lakshmana's power, he had to pay off his life for underestimating the not so powerful, less experienced Lakshmana.

Stretch yourself, do your best to your fullest capacity even if your contribution is not of great significance.

Monkeys were constructing bridge from India's sea shore to Srilanka under Rama's direction. Monkeys were throwing huge boulders into the sea to make the bridge. Seeing this, a squirrel near the sea shore was pushing little dust into the sea. It was doing its job to its fullest capacity and that too whole heartedly for a great cause. Its contribution was definitely negligibly in comparison to monkeys' efforts but it still carries a great message for all of us!

Exercises for developing determination:

1. *Maintain a to-do list and work on tasks based on priorities. Work on only one task at a time, do not multi-task.*
2. *Practice not to leave a task incomplete. The amount of positive energy we build when a task (small or big) is accomplished, is innumerable.*
3. *Whenever you find free time, practice to count from 1 to 1000. Practice not to give up until you count till 1000.*
4. *If you are walking count your steps.*
5. *Show enthusiasm to take up new challenges.*
6. *Always admire people who show lot of determination and enthusiasm in the fields of their interests.*
7. *Read autobiographies of great leaders from various fields, admire their states of determination.*

Understand others

We do not live with machines but live with human beings. As we get trained to understand machines, we also need to get trained to understand people. Respect laws of nature, don't try to conquer them. Respect human psychologies; observe general psychology of supervisors, sub-ordinates, fellow mates, relatives, common man, customers etc. These observations will help in important decision making at various situations.

Learn to understand your boss, subordinates, family and your friends.

Rama is the best example for a person who had thoroughly understood the nature of his relatives, parents, wife and people in the kingdom. He could read their mind and behave in a way that most of them agreed with him. There were cases in which few disagreed with him. for example - when Rama decided to leave Ayodhya and lead a forest life, Lakshmana strongly opposed so did everyone else except Kaikeyi. But still Rama could convince each one of them individually as he knew their pulse and then could leave for the forest.

So you should first understand others in order that others understand you.

Do not take offense when criticized by others and be pleased by the kindness shown by others.

While returning to Ayodhya after marrying Sita by snapping Lord Siva's bow, Rama was stopped on the way by Parasurama and was strongly criticized for considering being himself a great hero. Rama was then challenged to fight against Parasurama. Rama did not take offense but pleasingly accepted the challenge and destroyed Parasurama's ego. If someone criticizes you take that as a chance to improve yourself and do not develop personal grudge. This lesson is especially important in professional life as we often do not know our weakness and when someone criticizes us that only means we have something to improve. This positive outlook will surely take us to greater heights.

Caress for others, wear human face always. Extend help to others as much as you can and make difference.

During the direct combat between Rama & Ravana, Rama gashed Ravana's chest making him reel dizzily. Rama then addressed Ravana saying that he has been heroic in killing unlimited monkeys and so he will be refrained from being killed. Rama realized that Ravana was tired and so asked him to take rest and come back next day to fight. Rama was infact furious and wanted to defeat Ravana to gain back Sita but he was considerate enough to teach us a lesson – 'Accomplish what you desire but without bothering others.'

Be loyal not only to your boss but also to your subordinates.

When Lakshmana was wounded during the war, Rama told to Susena, a monkey warrior, that without Lakshmana victory would be meaningless to him and that he would die in case Lakshamana dies because Lakshmana was loyal enough to follow him to forest and dedicate his life for Rama's service. If you are loyal to others you will get loyalty in return.

Do not try to change the other person, you can only influence the other person. So there is no point in intending to change others. Understand common psychologies by studying people surrounding you and this learning on psychology helps a lot in influencing others to do what you want them to do.

Be patient. This is especially important when dealing with others. An impatient act might change the relations that were built over several years.

Find the right organization as per your career aspirations; once you join the organization, you may not be able to change the style of it. If it does not suit you, then there is no point in persuading it. Sometimes it might so happen that you join the organization only to realize that it does not suit you in such case you have to choose to either align to the organization or search for another one.

Build the team: A team requires diverse skills; a team with all members having same skills is inefficient. Diversity is important for a team – if everyone in the team start thinking alike then the team would never grow, it cannot challenge itself to exceed expectations of the organization or the customers.

Exercises to 'understand others':

1. *When it comes to understanding others – get into other's shoes to think on a situation from their perspective.*
2. *Ask your friends to criticize you and maintain a dated list of criticisms you receive, in a diary. Review them periodically to improve your attitude.*
3. *Go to remote villages, meet children in schools, talk to them – donate something that is essential for them – for example, clothes, food etc. Teach them some subjects or skills that are required in this modern world.*
4. *Learn to be patient – when you are angry, suppress it by counting numbers from 500 to 1 or so.*
5. *Read books on team building activities, try them on your team.*

Understand yourself

Be what you are, don't imitate others. If we want to gain results similar to those of others, we must first understand how others have gained the results, in what circumstances they could make it and then plan for our success. This analysis is required as what worked for others may not work for us as each one of us is unique in terms of abilities.

Best is the one who accomplishes more than the assigned duty, mediocre accomplishes less than the assigned duty, even though capable enough, worst is the one who doesn't even follow orders though capable.

When Hanuman returned to Rama after visiting Sita in Lanka, Rama praised him a lot for his extraordinary accomplishment. Hanuman was the best as he accomplished more than the assigned duty of finding out Sita. He not only found Sita but also showed Rama's strength to Ravana and also warned Ravana to return Sita to Rama. Hanuman completed the assigned job by exceeding everyone's expectations.

Below is a categorization that helps us to understand more about ourselves.

Wise person: Takes counsel of superiors & friends who have common interests and then acts to his fullest capacity.

Mediocre person: Thinks over a matter himself, thinks that his decisions are always rights, seeks no one else's advice and acts accordingly.

Vilest person: One who gives up faith and performs actions without a sense of duty; unable to judge what is beneficial and what is harmful, such persons go ahead blindly saying 'I shall do it no matter what'.

Understand how you affect others. This is another way of understanding yourself.

Do not adopt bossism kind of leadership as it is ineffective in the modern context. Most of us have opportunities to switch organizations and careers more than before. So subordinates would not tolerate bossism and besides this, bossism believes in threatening which yields lesser productivity as compared to assertive leadership which believes in commitment rather than compliance. Commitment does not come if you do not understand others & how you affect others. Bossism cannot gain support & commitment of people you lead.

Exercises to 'understand yourself'

1. *Maintain a diary to keep track of your relations with people. Make a list of your likes and dislikes, your strengths and weaknesses and reflect on them periodically.*
2. *Take time to reflect on yourself on a regular basis. Make room for few minutes of solitude and seclusion for yourself.*
3. *Identify negative thoughts that occupy your mind, write them down and try to convert them into positive thoughts, take appropriate counselling if required.*
4. *Read books on assertive leadership - about skills and practice techniques as per your needs.*

Positive nature

Be courageous, peaceful, self controlled, humble, tolerant and charitable. A leader offers an example of courage and sacrifice.

Rama was always peaceful and never complained about his fate. He was totally self-controlled during his happy moments as well as during adversity. He was humble to his parents, brothers, wife, and great sages as equally with his people in the kingdom. During the war against Ravana, he was tolerant by not killing Ravana immediately by deception, he was courageous enough to defeat Ravana as per the then existing rules of war. Rama was always charitable irrespective of his position as a prince in Ayodhya, as a wanderer in forest, as a warrior in Lanka and as a guest in Sugriva's kingdom.

Honesty will win hearts. It is not just about morals & ethics it is about survival. Honesty is not a jewel in your crown it is an important factor in your relations with others. And without proper relations with others your career will stale.

Always forgive and be humble about your own position. In this modern age success is not difficult to achieve. What is more important is to constantly keep up success. If you have ten competitors, it is sufficient for one of them to have you. But if you have to succeed against them, you have to surpass all the ten competitors. So do not consider your position to be a permanent own, be humble and modest and that is the best way to outstand.

Keep your promise. If you do so people will trust you and will be willing to invest their money, time, energy for you. So most of your tasks will become simple when you get others' help in return to your's help to others. We will need to help one another and cannot survive in isolation.

Sugriva and Rama had a mutual agreement of helping each other in rescuing their wives respectively. Rama first helped Sugriva by killing Sugriva's brother Vali and restoring his kingdom & wife. Sugriva in turn kept his promise by arranging the monkey army to search and find Sita.

Learning to be lucky - create your own luck. Follow below steps to be lucky. These would surely change your attitude towards luck.

- Preparation - know what you want: Develop clarity in what you want and then plan your success. Cultivate good habits for the cause.
- Practice: Keep practicing for perfection is not achieved at one go.
- Persistence (don't give up): Keep persuading, you will fail 19 times but surely succeed the 20th.
- Positive outlook: Maintain positive attitude when finding solutions to problems, in analyzing actions, and in building confidence.

Positive leadership is all about being positive most of the times. No one is perfect and so no one can certainly be positive all the times. Below is a list of some of the attitude changes that will develop positive leadership.

- Look to future not past.
- Focus on action not analysis
- See possibilities not just problems
- Take control don't be controlled
- Create options don't accept quo

Exercises to develop positive nature

1. *Create your own luck - by practicing perfection in any task you take, by developing positive outlook towards life of yours and that of others.*
2. *Practice positive leadership.*

Emotion management

Here I am making an attempt to list common weaknesses that most of us have which we cannot avoid altogether:

- Hypocrisy
- Anger
- Procrastination
- Laziness
- Contempt for good advice
- Lack of vigilance
- Fondness for bad council
- Impractical planning
- Inability to keep a secret
- Attachment for foolish friends
- Failure to counteract competitors

We will be victims of these weaknesses one or the other time. The best that can be done is to convert the negative energy that is generated by these weaknesses into positive energy. For example if you are angry at someone, try to find out the root cause genuinely keeping your ego aside for sometime. This will definitely help you develop strategies that can avoid what caused your anger.

Avoid excessive attachment or hatred, for both lead to degradation – maintain balance of emotions. Balance in emotions would not make us too depressed during adversity or too happy during fortune. Mental balance is important in making intelligent decisions and avoiding trouble. Despondency is useless, for it has never caused an action to bear fruits. Despair is the root failure.

Anger management:

Don't fall prey to uncontrolled anger's influence.

Hanuman after discovering Sita in Lanka decided to destroy part of Lanka to show Ravana the power of Rama. Hanuman wantedly got captivated and presented in front of Ravana who then out of uncontrolled anger ordered Hanuman's tail to be set fire. Ravana had to pay off for his uncontrolled anger as Hanuman set almost entire Lanka ablaze before leaving it.

Use anger in a constructive way and not in a destructive way. Anger will fetch you nothing; forgive mistakes and start fixing problems.

Rama kept his promise of rescuing Sugriva's kingdom and wife, but Sugriva lost senses in entertaining himself after acquiring kingdom. Rama patiently waited for few months, though outraged, sent a messenger to Sugriva to remind him of his promise to Rama. Sugriva then realized his mistake and quickly approached Rama who mercifully accepted apologies. Rama is the best example of someone who could easily suppress anger. He gained loyalty of Sugriva by being patient and by not expressing his anger.

Enthusiasm:

For one who lacks enthusiasm all activities become the cause of misery. For one whose mind is bewildered by grief all endeavors end in failure. Enthusiasm can take you farther than talent, title or skill could. Enthusiasm is at the bottom of all progress. With it there is accomplishment without it there are only excuses.

Nothing is more attractive and motivating than a leader who takes a positive view especially during times of great adversity. If you are enthusiastic, you will achieve every goal with great ease, people will stick with you through thick & thin times and most importantly everyone will have fun.

Passion:

If you are passionate about something you will never feel sick of persuading it.

In the battlefield, Rama & Lakshmana were tricked and injured by Ravana who then returned to his palace assuming victory. Rama & Lakshmana but then quickly regained consciousness and stirred enthusiasm among the monkeys; they were ready for the combat again. Seeing this speedy change, Ravana almost lost hopes of success this way Rama killed Ravana's courage by merely demonstrating his passion.

After Rama's victory in the war he requests Hanuman to bring Sita to him. Hanuman goes to get Sita and thinks of harming her demon maid-servants. Here's a story told by Sita to Hanuman refraining him from his intentions: Once upon a time in a forest, a hunter gets onto a tree in an attempt to escape from a tiger. The tiger demands a bear, who was residing on the higher branches of the tree, to push the hunter down. Bear refuses to do so as this was against its righteousness and then goes to sleep. Taking this as an opportunity, the tiger falsely promises hunter that if he pushes the bear away, he would not be harmed. The hunter pushes the bear away but the bear escapes by taking grip of a lower branch of the tree. Tiger then re-requests bear to give away hunter and take revenge. Bear refuses to do so as it does not want to return evil to ..

Envy and anger are human's biggest enemies, overcome them.

Envious of Rama's fame in Ayodhya, Kaikeyi's maid-servant Manthara decided to sow seeds of envy and anger in Kaikeyi's heart. Under Manthara's influence, Kaikeyi not realizing what harm she was causing to herself and to rest of the world demands her husband Dasharatha to order Rama to leave for forests. Rama obediently followed the orders and left Ayodhya. The result was that Dasharatha died out of grief leaving Kaikeyi a widow and also a subject of curse of the entire kingdom. Kaikeyi lost everything for being envious and cruel to Rama. She could have thought of a win-win situation in which Kaikeyi's son Bharata and Kausalya's son Rama along with other brothers could all rule the kingdom together.

Jealous, passion, fear, anger, lust, personal grudge, revenge and such other emotions blur your thoughts; therefore think keeping these aside, your judgment will then be fair enough.

Exercises to manage emotions

1. *Don't get too excited about everything. Avoid excessive attachment or hatred to something or someone.*
2. *Convert your anger in a constructive way.*
3. *Use positive affirmations to program your mind to avoid procrastination.*
4. *Show enthusiasm in doing new adventures, in helping others reach new heights.*
5. *Be open to good advice, even from a kid.*

Dream big

Take daring steps, think big and achieve big.

After Sita was kidnapped, Rama had a big task of conquering her kidnapper and rescuing her. Defeating Ravana and rescuing Sita would not have been possible if Rama kept worrying about his fate. He had to take daring steps towards his accomplishment. He had no initial estimate as to where to search, how long to travel, how long to wait etc. He took one step after the other with full focus, he managed to arrange a big army of monkeys, and he got the estimation of the opponent's strength through Hanuman. He systematically used the monkey force by organizing leads at various levels; he got a great bridge constructed across the sea for the entire monkey force to march to Lanka. He planned the war quite well, and finally achieved his biggest accomplishment which was otherwise almost impossible to make.

Dreams give you lot of messages, decode them and you will be left astonished knowing how wonderfully your subconscious mind works.

Learn to pray, it is the most powerful tool the mankind has ever known. Pray for what you want and you will get it. Prayer works on a simple principle. When you pray in a peaceful environment with your eyes closed, you do so with great intensity. As you keep praying for what you want at the same time everyday and at the same place if possible, then your mind easily shifts to alpha conscious level during your prayer and activates sub-conscious mind which is very powerful. The sub conscious mind cannot analyze what is fed to it. It only takes what is given to it and creates opportunities that allow accomplishment of what you pray for. If the affirmations that you make during prayer are negative then it is not the sub conscious mind that is to be blamed for the consequences. Positive

affirmations work best with the sub conscious mind. Making best out of prayer requires practice and patience.

Growth:

Your growth is all in your mind, your thinking is the limit.

Ambition:

Leaders are ambitious for themselves and for their organizations. Managers may be reasonable but leaders are selectively unreasonable. Unreasonable leaders listen to all the reasons why something cannot be achieved then they simply focus on how it will be achieved. Leaders with ambition tend to enjoy accelerated careers: they succeed fast or fail fast. But at least they learn a lot and the journey is exciting.

Exercises on thinking and achieving big

1. *Dream big, don't think of obstacles, write them down.*
2. *Make prayer part of your life, pray for noble qualities, pray for big achievements.*
3. *Be unreasonably ambitious for yourself, for your time and for your organization*

Stress management

It is more the mental strain than the physical strain that makes us feel sick.

During the battle between Rama and Ravana, Ravana severely wounded both Rama & Lakshmana and left to his palace assuming his victory. But he soon discovered the monkey mob's bravado and realized the Rama & Lakshmana recovered almost instantly, it was the mental strength that made them get into form.

Most of our illness or strain is due to our negative thoughts; if we can keep our mind fit then we can avoid most of our physical and mental strain.

Here are few tips to maintain stress levels:

1. Take quick nap whenever possible this acts like an amazing refresher.
2. Listen to your favorite music.
3. Exercise for half an hour at least either in the morning or in the evening whichever time is convenient to you. Morning time is however preferable because of its freshness.
4. Work based on priorities, do not try to accomplish too much in a short time.
5. Practice meditation and breathing exercises that suit you.

Professionalism

Professionalism is important and it varies in each context. It is important to figure out what it means and to agree to it.

Attire: Your attire like your body language conveys message which you may or may not have intended to. Follow dress code as per the event that you participate. In office follow dress code recommended by the organization. Dress code is not for compliance but for an outlook that reflects the organization.

While sending his sons to the battle, Ravana decorates them with ornaments and garlands that fit to demon princes. The underlying intention was to develop enthusiasm among demons and create chaos among monkeys.

Change your attire as per the situation in which you are.

Behave professionally, be fair and noble. Nobody might come to validate one's nobility. But it is our attitude that creates opportunities for us.

In the battle, Sugriva had a combat with Kumbha, son of Kumbhakarna. Sugriva observed that Kumbha was powerful but was very much exhausted and so did not kill him & offered him to return to palace. Sugriva thus behaved professionally as per then existing norms of war.

In the battle, it had become difficult to defeat Indrajit, son of Ravana. Rama had however come to know, by Vibhishana, brother of Ravana but devotee of Rama, of a weakpoint of Indrajit. Brahma had long ago predicted that Indrajit would be killed while engaged in performing sacrifices. With this as a hint, Rama at once sent Lakshmana to defeat Indrajit. If this proactive step is not taken, Indrajit would have become even more powerful and undefeatable after finishing his sacrifices.

Commitment is a key to success. Even if you do not succeed you will learn a lot that will be useful in your next endeavor.

In the final stage of the battle between Rama & Ravana, both were supposed to combat face to face. While heading towards the battle field, Ravana saw inauspicious omens. The then beliefs used to consider omens quite seriously. Despite of his beliefs, Ravana started towards the battle field as he was committed to fight and protect his kingdom against Rama. Ravana, though an evil minded, was an abundant treasure of good qualities as well.

Learn to say sorry and thank you. Ask for apology if you trouble someone and then don't repeat it. Saying 'sorry' or 'thank you' does not reduce our dignity but does increase it several folds.

During face to face combat with Ravana, Indra, the king of gods, gifted Rama with a chariot along with its charioteer, Matali. Rama headed towards battlefield in his new chariot and was giving instructions to Matali but soon realized that it was Indra's charioteer and asked for apology. Matali was deeply touched by this. Rama infact had complete rights to order the charioteer and being a king he need not ask for apology to anyone especially for a silly mistake. This incident teaches us a lesson: we

When things go wrong, great leaders take full responsibility for the results. It is easy to dodge your responsibilities but we cannot dodge the consequences of doing so.

Exercises on practicing professionalism

1. *Practice saying 'sorry' or 'thank you' as per the situation. There is nothing wrong in admitting a mistake, however silly it might seem. Similarly there is nothing wrong in expressing your gratitude for the smallest help you receive from someone.*
2. *Learn from your failures and successes – record them in a diary for your frequent references.*

Etiquette

We all know about etiquettes. In just one sentence etiquette is to do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Exercises on etiquettes

1. *Read and practice on etiquettes – phone etiquettes, table etiquettes, email etiquettes, etc.*

Humility

Learn to smile away difficulty. Treat happiness and suffering as equal.

During the direct combat between Rama and Ravana, Ravana assaulted Rama with thousands of arrows leaving Rama with severe pains. Ravana's arrows could injure Rama physically but could not steal away smile on his face.

Laughter especially poking fun at yourself could defuse almost any issue. Genuine smile can steal hearts. It will be easy to make others believe in you if you welcome them with smile. Make a point to meet your team members regularly, if possible daily and spend some light moments with them. Take out separate time for casual meets as formal meetings may not always be fun.

Humility leads to strength and not to weakness. It is the highest form of self-respect to admit mistakes and to make amends for them. Admit mistakes and make your team also do so. Mistakes do happen; make strategies to learn from them constructively together as a team.

A sense of humor is part of the art of leadership, of getting along with people, of getting things done. Humility for leaders is about self-awareness, the first step about doing something towards good & bad points. No leader gets ticks in all boxes.

Exercises on humility

1. *Smile away your difficulties. No difficulty is big enough to remove smile on your face.*
2. *Use laughter therapy, join laughing club if possible.*
3. *Watch healthy comedy movies, shows, read healthy comedy books.*
4. *Create light mood when you are with your team.*
5. *Crack jokes on yourself or in general – take enough precaution not to hurt anyone in your team directly or indirectly. Avoid cracking jokes on sensitive topics.*

Balance in life

Don't bring office work to home and home problems to office, try to practice this. Not many might agree to this philosophy though. But try to allocate some time to be spent with your family everyday this helps in change in mood that allows you to play your role, either in office or in house, effectively.

During the battle Rama was single minded and had no other thought but to defeat king of Lanka and rescue Sita. After the battle concluded, Rama immediately gave up his anger and assumed his usual gentle appearance as if nothing happened before. Changing the mood so drastically is usually not an easy task to achieve; it requires practice.

Work life balance allows you to create & sustain energy that will carry you to the top.

Follow balanced diet. Avoid junk food and switch to healthy diet. Exercise at least five days a week for about 45 minutes each time.

Watch comedy dramas, do light reading. This will help to change mood and relax effectively.

Sleep for at least six hours a day. Take cat naps whenever possible.

Take courses in yoga, meditation, dance, music etc as per your taste.

Living the values

Leaders have more power than even they realize. They create value to the team by the following few aspects –

Performance: Encourage team to improve their performance by providing them hands on training on technology. Provide customer interaction to the extent possible so that the team knows what exactly the customer needs are.

Measurement & promotion systems: Find out mechanisms to measure performance of the team. Encourage team with spot awards, appreciation in front of the higher management, promotions as appropriate.

Behavior: Treat individuals in the team equally. Show in your behavior exactly what you expect from the team in return.

Career management

Know your company before joining it. Find the right context and you can succeed otherwise you will struggle. Leaders succeed only in right context. Do not assume that other organizations are perfect. All organizations have similar problems especially within an organization. When you move, you loose skills (power, relations, credibility, trust and knowledge)

Know emerging assignments & opportunities within your project or in neighbor projects. This will help in finding a better context to develop career faster.

Avoid succeeding too much at things you do not like. This is one of the ways you could communicate to your higher management clearly about your career goals.

Make yourself very useful to people who have interesting assignments. This works effectively as the people who have assignments of your interests would know your capabilities and so can easily give you a chance to prove yourself and thereby boost up your career.

Exercises on career management

1. *Plan your career path and do justice to your current roles and responsibilities.*
2. *Gesture your interest in higher roles and responsibilities to your management through action.*

Personality management

Relaxation skills

There are different ways in which one would seek relaxation. Here are few ways in which one could relax, there could be other means of relaxation.

1. Travel to different places; make learning out of your travel. Most of us like traveling different places. This changes our mood and rejuvenates. But too much of travel with no proper rest might not serve the purpose so plan it well and make most out of it.
2. Most of the ideas/solutions flash in your mind when you are out of your work place. So make best of your breaks, travel trips and holidays.
3. Meditation and yoga play important role in maintaining physical and mental health and also in keeping away stress.
4. Laughter therapy is also a good idea as it keeps you rejuvenated throughout the day. Morning time is preferable for this.
5. Enjoy reading books of your taste. Identify your areas of interest and maintain a mini library of books and use it whenever you are free. If you like e-books then have their copies on your mobile devices and read them when you find time. Some of us might like audio books; this will be good choice especially when you are travelling.
6. Chanting also helps in relaxation, rejuvenation. Use affirmations that suggest your sub-conscious mind to relax.

During the direct combat between Rama & Ravana, Agastya Risi visited Rama without Ravana knowing of it. Agastya knew that Rama was greatly fatigued by fighting, so suggested him an affirmation on Sun god and requested him to chant it repeatedly. Rama followed Agastya's guidance and felt rejuvenated after the holy chant. This quick therapy was critical for Rama to collect his lost strength to achieve the final victory.

Habit management

Habit management is all about learning and unlearning habits. Any series of activities that we do repeatedly forms a habit. For example, we get up morning and without much thought go near wash basin with our tooth brush to clean our teeth. Once a habit is formed we do not really need to consciously review the

activities each time. We tend to develop few habits at our will and few others automatically.

A leader should be capable to manage habits effectively. This is for the leader's personal benefit as well as for the benefit of the team, the higher management, the organization and the customers. Success can be managed through habit management. Success is not possible without the inner urge; similarly habit management is also not possible without the inner urge.

You will enjoy doing what you like and anything that you do so repeatedly becomes a habit.

Hanuman was given the toughest task of finding Sita. The task was difficult in nature as he had to cross sea by flying in the air. The breadth of the sea was not known; even if he could cross the sea, would he be able to find out Sita was also not known. With so many unknowns and difficulties involved, the task was an almost impossible feat. But Hanuman's attitude was praise worthy. He was ready to take risks, was totally dedicated to Rama's service, wholeheartedly enjoyed doing it and was very positive about bringing back good news to Rama.

What gives you pleasure is your area of interest. If you want to get interested in something then seek pleasure in it, as repeatedly doing what interests you will turn into a habit. This is how you can learn and unlearn habits.

Here are few suggestions in cultivating habits that are essential for a leader –

1. Strive for perfection, success follows automatically.
2. Don't hesitate to work beyond your schedule. Stretch yourself if required, this will develop perfection in your work.
3. If you want to achieve something churn your brain with thoughts and action, you will get good & bad intermediate outcomes, but finally you will achieve what you want.

During the tour with Viswamitra, Rama learnt a lot about dharma through story telling. Viswamitra narrated a story on natural enmity between demigods and demons. Following advice of the supreme godhead, demigods and demons churned ocean to extract nectar from it. They used Vasuki a big serpent as a rope and also Manadara mountain for the purpose of churning. The churning produced poison which Siva consumed for everyone's benefit, it also produced six hundred million apsaras, gold, moon, Kamadhenu and several others. Finally the nectar was produced.

The short story tells us to keep going on until you receive what you want.

4. Gain ability to give up your dear things when needed. In other words learn to unlearn your habits that give you only temporary pleasure and harm you in the long run.

Rama, after receiving orders from his father Dasharatha, was all set to leave Ayodhya. Rama did not even hesitate for a fraction of second and readily banished the chance of getting onto the throne. It is extremely difficult to expel the idea of getting onto hold of something especially when everything is in our favor. This is often relevant to misusing power. To conquer this bad habit itself is to gain self-control. And anyone who can control his self first can easily control others.

5. Learn good habits from others and discard the bad ones.
6. If you excel at your job you will get similar job again. If you don't want to do that job, don't excel in it. You only excel at what you do and this is how a leader can build & sustain the stamina required for leadership marathon.

When Lakshmana was injured during the war with Indrajit, the son of Ravana, Hanuman was the obvious choice in getting the herbs from Himalayas. Hanuman already had an experience and capability to fly over longer distances as first time he had made his journey to Lanka over the ocean. Hanuman exceeding met expectations of all and brought the herbs for Lakshmana. There was another incident in which Rama & Lakshmana both were injured and that time also Hanuman was the obvious choice. If Hanuman had no interest in flying over larger area then he would have not met expectations leave alone exceeding them. Hanuman would not at all be considered if he had showed no interest, for Hanuman was not the only one with such unique capabilities.

7. Willing to do what others will not always gives you the competitive edge.

During the stay on the land of Lanka, Rama & Lakshmana had severe medical emergencies twice. And the life saving herbs was known to be available in Himalayas located on the head of India while Lanka was near its foot. Hanuman was the obvious choice in bringing herbs to Lanka from Himalayas. The feat of flying across India from extreme South to extreme North was several times tougher than the feat of fling across sea from India's foot to Lanka's sea shore. But Hanuman not only flew to Himalayas but also brought entire Mountain to Lanka. And he performed this feat twice to save Rama & Lakshmana. Each time Hanuman was the obvious choice was he qualified to do the task and most importantly he was more than willing to do it. Had he not showed his willingness to perform the task, someone else from the monkey mob would have!

Here is a strategy on how to work to win:

- Play to your strengths
- Visualize success
- Think like a winner
- Create a team that compensates for your weaknesses

You will never be the person you can be if pressure, tension and discipline are taken out of your life. Discipline is all about cultivating powerful habits that become part of your lifestyle.

Chapter3: PEOPLE SKILLS

Leadership requires getting other people to do things, it is not about doing it all yourself. So it is extremely important for a leader to influence his people in order to be followed. There are two ways in which people can be made to follow. One is throw bossism which enforces compliance and the other is throw assertive leadership which focuses on commitment from people. Assertive leadership is being adopted by many leaders as it creates win-win situation to them and their people.

Leaders in an organization are seen at various levels. Different levels of leadership are set to different levels of expectations. The following is a brief list of expectations from top leaders; expectations arranged in the descending order of priority –

Vision: Any organization would start business with a vision. Without vision there is no scope for business. Leaders have prime responsibility in setting vision for their team and in tracking goals to stick to the vision.

Ability to motivate others: Leaders are judged by their ability to motivate others; if they cannot motivate, they simply cannot lead.

Decisiveness: A leader will be looked at when important decisions have to be taken; a simple mistake, a low degree of foresightedness can on a leader's side, especially a top leader's side can adversely affect organization's growth & reputation.

Ability to handle crisis: Crisis management requires leaders to learn from history as well as to think in future. Knowledge on - the region where organization is located, the influence of natural calamities on the region, the politics prevailing in the region, the society of the region and other factors will be important in designing crisis management. A leader would require ability to take decisions on such design, also to monitor mock crisis to check readiness on the organization's part to face crisis, and to handle crisis efficiently when it strikes.

Honesty: A leader carries reputation of the organization, and if he is not honest, entire organization's repute will be at stake.

Integrity: Integrity issues are often not forgivable as leader is expected to be impartial to all the stake holders he deals with. Some of the integrity issues include – encouraging a particular religion or caste, encouraging gender domination, encourage bribe.

Leadership requires strong people skills such as the following. This chapter attempts to throw light on all of these skills –

Hiring skills
Motivation skills

Knowledge sharing skills
Team management & people engagement skills
Selling skills
Delegating skills
Expectations management skills
Say 'no' skills
Conflict management skills
Feedback taking skills

Hiring skills

If leaders can take little precaution in hiring then they will be able to choose candidates who right apt for the position being filled.

A leader cannot do his job all by himself. He would need to find answers to so many unknowns in the business game. So, leaders should learn to hire those who can find solutions for them as they cannot afford to waste time in searching for all answers on their own.

While searching for Sita in forests, Rama & Lakshmana happened to meet Kabandha, a demigod who suggested them to see Sugriva, a king of monkeys residing on Rsyamuka Hill. Kabandha also described Sugriva and Rama realized that hiring Sugriva would the first step towards success in finding Sita. Sugriva was a powerful monkey king with a huge force of monkeys at his disposal. He had members who could get deep below earth, could climb mountains or trees easily and even jump across far away places at one go. All those feats that Rama could otherwise not perform could easily be accomplished by getting in agreement with Sugriva.

Bring in the experts to get the job done. A half an hour interview may be able to read the candidate's mind even though it may be able to check candidate's technical abilities. So leaders should find new ways to interview a candidate for their projects. The best way to test someone's ability is to give him a scenario and to find out his reaction in such a situation.

After receiving Lanka and before the battle between Rama & Ravana commenced, Vibhishana visited Rama and expressed his willingness to be on his side. Sugriva and all other monkey leaders doubted Vibhishana to be a spy of Ravana with the purpose of estimating enemy's strength. But Rama had a different mind set, he asked questions to Vibhishana with warmth in his heart. He also investigated on the strengths and weakness of Ravana. Vibhishana answered to all the queries with great enthusiasm and honesty. Rama did not take much time to realize that Vibhishana was infact truthful and so hired him and strengthened his luck in the combat that was to come. Thus Rama was able read Vibhishana in a short interview and found him to be a useful resource.

Expertise is just one criterion in hiring a candidate. There are however other factors, such as behavior, goals and nature of the candidate, which are to be considered before hiring. So learn whom to hire and whom not to, based on criteria required for the role the candidate is being chosen for.

Before Sugriva and Rama could become friends in the presence of fire, Sugriva expressed his doubts on Rama's ability to defeat Vali the elder brother of Sugriva. Rama was to save Sugriva's kingdom & wife by defeating Vali and then get help from Sugriva in return in searching Sita. To clear his doubts, Sugriva requested Rama to split one of the seven strong trees that stood in a row with a single arrow. Rama then took one single arrow and split all the seven trees at a time and thereby surpassed Sugriva's expectations. With this incident Sugriva wiped off all his doubts on Rama's strength and framed a positive impression about him. Sugriva was thus able to choose Rama correctly for his mission on getting back his kingdom and wife from his own brother Vali.

Sometimes it will be very difficult to fill gaps in a project. Required level of expertise may not be available in the market. To face such situations, leaders can try one option of making their existing employees experts by giving them required training to develop expertise. Again this will be subjected to ability of the existing team to reach the required expertise level and also the team's bandwidth to take up new responsibilities while continuing to work on existing ones.

Exercises on improving hiring skills

1. *Practice to observe other's nature by studying their behavior. This will help in judging a candidate's willingness to contribute to the organization.*

Motivation skills

Motivation is all about inspiring others. If you want someone to perform great tasks, inspire them. Bossism never requires motivating others but assertive leadership depends on motivation. There is a simple thumb rule for motivating others. Just answer the questions –

How do you prefer to be led?

What would you change?

and then you will know how to motivate others.

Here are few simple rules of motivating your team -

1. Show interest in team's career.
2. Show that you are trustworthy.
3. Recognize team's contribution.
4. Praise your team in public.

Demonstrating your potency is another way of motivating others. If you cannot show extraordinary potency, you will not be accepted as a great leader and so you will not be a great source of inspiration.

At the stage of getting ready to reach Lanka, the entire monkey mob under the supervision of Rama & Lakshmana set to construct a bridge from extreme south of India to the sea shores of Lanka. The construction of bridge was not an ordinary feat as it had to be over the ocean's surface and that too using floatable stones. This important feat of constructing a vast bridge by millions of monkeys for their own march to Lanka was one of feats that showed Rama's extraordinary potency as a great leader.

There is another tip on inspiring others. Leaders inspire others but they can in turn get inspired by others! So, read autobiographies of great leaders, meet great contemporary leaders and learn from them by keenly observing them.

Exercises on motivation skills

1. *Answer to the following questions and record it all in a diary –
How you prefer to be led?
What would you change in the existing processes to improve productivity?*
2. *Give career counselling to your team. But be sure you are not working against your organization.*
3. *Recognize team's contribution in various forums.*

Knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing and mentoring are about helping people discover their own potential to resolve their own issues. These are not about telling them what to do or solving all the problems for them. The more you solve problems for people, the more they will bring their problems to you.

Have a mechanism for free flow of knowledge within the team. Conduct sessions for the team and also encourage team to have regular knowledge sharing among them. The knowledge sharing can be –

1. Classroom sessions
2. Internal wiki sites
3. Documentations
4. Discussions

Thumb rule is - Don't keep your knowledge (that can be shared) to yourself. This rule will however be governed by the information classification policy that is exercised in your organization. Know who is qualified to receive what kind of knowledge in what form before imparting it.

Valmiki wrote entire Ramayana and was looking for someone who could spread it to the entire world. At that time Sita along with her two children Lava & Kusa was residing in Valmiki's ashram, Valmiki then considered these children suitable for propagating Ramayana all over the world. The children were active, quick at memorizing toughest poems, were eager to master Ramayana and above all were the sons of Rama himself. Valmiki was right in taking this decision as the children made extraordinary performances wherever they went to entail Ramayana to common man. So choosing right candidates, for bestowing knowledge from Ramayana was also crucial in Ramayana's success.

Advantage of knowledge sharing is of several folds. It is instrumental in team backup plans. It will allow more conceptual understanding of a topic.

And the best way of knowledge sharing is through hands on to the extent possible; this way the topic will also become interesting and team will show willingness to learn and also contribute. If you want to teach others, do it yourself first. Don't preach anything that you are not aware of as it would not add much of a value.

Soft skills, technical skills etc are some of the topics that are worth including in knowledge sharing sessions.

Story telling is one of the effective ways of knowledge sharing. All other creative techniques can also be evaluated and adopt what suits to the team.

Exercises on knowledge sharing

1. *Allow team to launch an internal wiki site where they can discuss on various stuff such as technical, non-technical, domain, competition etc*
2. *Encourage team to have regular internal knowledge sharing and brainstorming session.*
3. *Allow team to explore on various innovative and creative techniques.*

Team management & people engagement

People skills are mostly about people engagement. Here the term 'people' includes – your teams, higher management, organization, customers and also competitors.

Below are few thoughts on how to effectively engage people.

1. Performance:
Here are a few tips on improving team's performance.

Don't discourage or insult anybody for poor performance, instead encourage him/her to improve. Encourage others to prove themselves, be positive about their winning.

Provide project's vision, the expected results and project scope to the team and leave the execution to the team.

Before Sugriva set his monkey army on Sita's search, Rama shared his vision of finding Sita with Sugriva, Hanuman and other chiefs. He then expressed his expectations of seeing some belonging of her as a proof of her existence. His vision and expectations were simple. Sugriva then created his own expectations that aligned with Rama's and shared them with his chief army Angada, Nila, Hanuman, Jambhavan and others. Sugriva's expectations were that each of his chiefs should form their own teams and set for searching in different directions. The scope was only to find Sita out and bring something from her as her mark. Sugriva clearly explained where to and where not to search. The execution was time bound and everyone was expected to return on time to report their findings. Thus a clear cut vision that was cascaded from top management, Rama could stir positive energy in the monkeys who were given enough freedom of execution and so the monkeys could complete the mission, of finding Sita, with great commitment.

Hanuman was identified to search Sita in southward direction for he was the most courageous, intelligent, resourceful and self confident among all the monkeys. Hanuman was mentored by Jambhavan, another monkey hero, to make him realize his own abilities. Similarly other monkey chiefs were identified for search in different other directions based on their capabilities. This exercise was crucial on the part of monkey leaders in improving.

Expose your team to higher management and let higher management realize team's strengths. Show confidence in your team and the team shall definitely outstand.

When choosing Hanuman for Sita's search mission, Sugriva praised his abilities in front of Rama who then got convinced about Hanuman's abilities and handed him his ring for Hanuman to show it to Sita when he meets her. Hanuman was the only monkey to get such an opportunity and the credit was mainly due to Sugriva's willingness to praise Hanuman in front of Rama. This also boosted Hanuman's confidence several folds and he fulfilled his mission beyond everybody's expectations.

To speed up productivity on a project, get prototypes, designs done quickly by small teams and finally arrange a meeting to choose the best of the designs that are suitable for the project.

One month after all the monkeys were set on searching mission, all chiefs except Hanuman returned disappointed as they could not find Sita. Sugriva along with Rama closely evaluated the situation based on what the chiefs had to say and they finally concluded that Hanuman was the only hope. This method of making different groups work on same piece but using different approaches helped Sugriva to take quick decisions and thereby speed up the process of searching Sita.

Know when an organization structure is to be followed and when not to be followed. Sometimes it is efficient to skip organizational hierarchy and approve a process that is essential in quick and efficient way to deliver. Follow the organization hierarchy under normal circumstances.

Comfort and care for your team, the team shall show same attitude in return.

Angadha comforted his team and arranged for fruits and cold water, allowed them to relax for sometime. This rejuvenated the team and they resumed searching. This brought some confidence in Angadha. In return to Angadha's concern to his team, he received better performance from his team on the mission of finding Sita.

Give team chance to rectify its mistakes & improve it.

Before the war between Rama & Lakshmana, Ravana sent spies to Rama's camp in Lanka to estimate enemy's strength. The spies mingled among the monkeys disguised as monkeys but were soon caught by Vibhishana as was familiar with them. Immediately monkeys surrounded the spies and beat them severely. However when this situation brought to Rama's attention, he mercilessly ordered them to be set free. The spies went back to Ravana and reported all that happened and praised Rama in front of Ravana himself as they had powerful impression of Rama's nobility in their minds. Thus Rama gained good will among enemies team also just by giving them an opportunity to reflect on their mistakes.

Communicate success stories back to team this will make team proud and recharged thereby team productivity increases.

Kumbhakarna, the gigantic younger brother of Ravana, was brought into the battle field to defeat Rama's army. He was like a huge mountain and crushed many monkeys under his feet. It was very difficult for anyone to kill Kumbhakarna. After severe war, Rama killed Kumbhakarna. The monkeys who were near the site were overjoyed and felt rejuvenated. The other monkeys who were on the other sides of the battlefield were kept communicated on the major milestones in the war. This kept the entire army's spirit in tact and brought victory sooner than expected.

Express your satisfaction and recognition when a team member does a heroic feat. When you praise others, you tend to create positive atmosphere around and also you will learn something new.

During the war, Angada the son of monkey king Vali had to fight with Narantaka a son of Ravana. The fight was fierceful and none of them carried for even severe injuries during the combat and kept themselves busy in action. Angada took daring steps to get an upper hand over the opponent. And after several hours of consistency, Angada killed Narantaka. Rama was both pleased and astonished to witness Angada's heroic feat and appreciated him whole heartedly in front of everybody. Praise from Rama created a positive energy among the monkeys and there by made them perform even better.

When one team member has trouble getting something done, other team members should rush to help. This will develop unity and confidence within the team, which are quite essential for smooth execution.

During the war, Angada the son of monkey king Vali & prince of monkeys had to fight with another son of Ravana, Trisira. The combat was again furious but at one stage Trisira struck three arrows in Angada's forehead. Hanuman & Nila immediately rushed to help Angada though they were already engaged in combat with other demons. They took extra efforts to sail their prince through. Mutual help amongst monkeys kept them moving with confidence and so the monkeys could win the show with grace.

Your team deserves nice treatment with a couple of awards and rewards.

Once the war ended, Sita was brought to Rama and all were set to leave Lanka. Before leaving Rama summoned all the monkey warriors and praised them for their heroic feat on his behalf. With this he requested them to return to Kishkindha and live happily under Sugriva's leadership. Rama's courtesy made the monkeys even more devoted to him. Team awards are as important as individual excellence awards.

Extraordinary performance of a team is mostly influenced by the leader than the team itself. This is because a team without a leader will not know where they are and where they are set to go. Leader plays a crucial role in setting goals, setting targets, designing roadmaps for the team. Leader is also crucial in team's excellence execution.

During the war when Indrajit, a son of Ravana attacked Rama & Lakshmana with powerful weapons awarded to him by Brahma. Rama & Lakshmana let themselves overcome by those powerful weapons as a honor to Brahma. Assuming that Rama & Lakshmana were severely injured, all the monkeys that were fighting enthusiastically till then at once came to halt and became exceedingly depressed. Vibhishana immediately revealed the secret to the monkeys and brought them to their battle form. This is an example to show that leader's (Rama's) influence was more on monkeys when performance is considered.

Tips on improving productivity

- a. *show areas of improvement and encourage team to improve.*
- b. *Allow freedom of execution.*
- c. *Keep away from 'I am right always' mode.*
- d. *Expose your team to higher management.*
- e. *Keep communicating success stories to your team.*

2. Respect:

Respect others' feelings. Adhere to truth, and show love to your fellow beings. When you respect others, others will respect you in return and will show interest in what you have to say. And so it will be easy to drive your thoughts.

Respect rules of the land in which you are. This is important as different regions all over the world have different cultures, traditions. And be it a global business or local business, it is very important not to sent wrong signals to the people whom we interact. Get at least an informal training on cultures, traditions of the people with whom you interact.

Rama along with Lakshama & Sita used tree barks for clothes. Rama & Lakshmana matted their hair like Rishis, they used wooden sandals for footwear. This attire was the then uniform normally followed by those who used to reside in forests. The change in attire was mostly to improve comfort level whilst their stay in the forest. Rama expressed his respect to forest by choosing the then followed uniform worn by forest inhabitants.

When Hanuman met Sita in Lanka, Sita expressed her doubts as to how the other monkeys and Rama could reach Lanka. To clear her doubts, Hanuman assured her that all other monkeys were at least equal to him in terms of capabilities. This erased all the doubts that Sita had in her mind. Although Hanuman was powerful enough, he respected his fellow monkeys and honored their abilities. Had he not had that respect to his fellow monkeys, he would not have been able to instill confidence in Sita's mind.

3. Promise: Keep up your promise to your dear ones, your colleagues and to your customers. This will build relations and will help others install confidence in you.

Dasharatha had tough time in keeping promise to his dearest wife Kaikeyi as she asked for benedictions that were very hard for him to bestow. She had asked for son, Bharata to be the heir apparent and had expressed her desire for Rama to live in forest in exile for fourteen years. Dasharatha had no other choice but to keep his promise, and he apparently left his soul after seeing Rama's exile. With this example I do not mean that one should blindly make a promise and fulfill it in spite of inevitable hardships. The point to be noted here is that one has to think before making a promise and try to fulfill it and if that is not possible then at least make some other arrangements so that promise is not totally denied.

4. Cost cutting:

Bottom line cost cutting is not exciting but it definitely improves balance sheet. But if cost cutting effects salaries then that will definitely demoralize employees, so this attempt will directly affect team's performance.

A hot summer day can be made to seem like a spring day without being high on electricity bills, similarly there will be means to cut costs without directly impacting employees. For example, you can save on electricity bills by designing work locations such that there is no need to burn electric lights during day time.

Learn how to cut costs without cutting down salaries and incentives to your employees.

5. Relations:

Keep good relations with those who are loyal, intelligent, generous, wise, brave & powerful.

While searching for Sita, Rama & Lakshmana came to know that Sugriva, a monkey king resided on Rsyamuka hill. They learnt from Kabandha, a demigod, that Sugriva was loyal, intelligent, generous, wise, brave & powerful. Rama & Lakshmana then immediately set to meet him and make friends with him. Rama's decision to make alliance with Sugriva made an easy path to recover Sita within short period of time.

A frank counsel will be made only to dear ones. Flatterers are easy to be found. Well wisher is the one who actually speaks for one's benefit without flattering. So give good counsel to your team members as and when required, this kind of moral support will make them stay with the time for years to come.

When Ravana learnt that Rama had crossed ocean and reached Lanka, he started to discuss with his well wishers made his next move. All well-wishers started to praise Ravana's capabilities and underestimated Rama's abilities. This created a false pride in Ravana's heart. Vibhishana, a younger brother of Ravana was the only one who kept himself away from the job of flattering. He strongly suggested Ravana to give up false pride and at once return Sita. Vibhishana was only true well-wisher of Ravana as he was worried about Ravana's safety but Ravana was too blind to realize this and foolishly exiled away his brother. Vibhishana was enough loyal to Ravana to give him a good counsel and Ravana had to suffer later for not receiving good advice.

Don't argue/attack/fight with someone who has superior strength. This is an important lesson – if you really have to win an argument then find out means of gaining upper hand without hurting ego of those superior in strength. Higher management normally does not like team members arguing with them or finding faults with them. At times arguments and pin-pointing mistakes is definitely required by that has to be done in a manner that the receiver is not hurt.

There is short story in this regard. A person went to father of the church and asked him - "can I smoke while praying?" The father said no. Another person asked for the same thing in a different manner – "can I pray while smoking?" The father said – "you can very well do that my son!" It is therefore all in the way you interpret it.

From the very day the war between Rama & Ravana commenced, Ravana kept losing all his relatives, army chiefs one after the other. At one stage it was quite clear that Rama was far superior in strength. All the well-wishers of Ravana started suggesting him to return Sita to Rama. But Ravana was adamant enough to be deaf to good advice. Therefore, Ravana had to die to put an end to the war. Ravana should not have even thought of war with Rama who is far superior to Ravana in strength.

Utilize opportunities properly, make sure this does not hurt your boss or subordinates. You definitely need to bag those opportunities that come your way but also consider that this will not impact the chances of your subordinates to prove their point.

During the direct combat between Rama & Ravana the demigods from heaven observed that the war was not being fought fairly as Ravana was riding a chariot but Rama was standing on the ground. Taking this observation as a hint Indra, the king of demigods sent a chariot and charioteer, Matali to Rama. Rama immediately accepted this opportunity and continued the combat. Rama took an opportunity but that was no way bothering his followers; if accepting chariot from Indra anyone bothered Rama, he would have straight away rejected that honour.

Do regular self-assessments to strengthen your strengths and weaken your weaknesses. Put yourself in others shoes to know how they would feel about the situation. Follow your own self-assessment strategies, but the goal is to improve each time and sustain improvement.

During face to face combat with Ravana, Indra, the king of gods, gifted Rama with a chariot along with its charioteer, Matali. Rama headed towards battlefield in his new chariot and was giving instructions to Matali but soon realized he might feel bad about getting instructions from a human being and immediately asked for his apology. Rama in fact had right to give orders to the charioteer but he had the ability to read other's mind to know what they would think about him. He was ever eager to strengthen his strengths and weaken his weaknesses.

Relation between team and leader:

Without a proper leader even a large team becomes hopeless. If a team does not perform well, it is mostly not the team that is to be blamed but its leader that is to be.

During the war between Rama and Ravana, Indrajit, Ravana's son assaulted Rama & Lakshmana and wounded them all over the body. Rama & Lakshmana lost all their physical and mental stamina, they lost all their weapons and fell unconscious. Seeing this, monkeys became despondent. Indrajit assumed Rama's death and left to his palace.

The context is set here not to say that Rama is to be blamed, but to show how the relation of team with its leader will have direct impact on team's performance as a whole.

Exercises on relations

1. Do self-assessment based on SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis on your relations with family, friends and team.

6. Team building:

You cannot do everything so, employ others who can fill your short comes. For instance, a leader cannot involve in all phases of a product development life cycle. So he needs to employ people with versatile talents and abilities who could do the jobs for him.

In Ramayana, Rama had employed Hanuman for job that was unique in its nature. Hanuman could fly distances and could multiply his strength several folds at ease. Similarly there were many in the monkey army with exceptional abilities. Rama had an advantage due to these versatile talents.

Team formation depends on project vision, required abilities, positive aspects, execution time and also individual's mentality. Team building and retrospection is instrumental in project success.

Search group headed by Angada lost all its confidence at one stage. The group even thought of mass suicide. But then did a retrospection to realize their mistakes and then built confidence among them to resume search. They even made Hanuman realize his unique abilities to fly longer distances and finally made him fly to Lanka in search of Sita.

An architect/engineer is essential to design & construct architecture. Specialized skill set is required to do specialized jobs, there is no problem if project afford to hire people with all the specialized skills required by the

project. Otherwise, leader should play a crucial role in preparing existing team to learn multiple skill set and sail the project smoothly.

When Rama decided to have a bridge constructed across the ocean, he needed an architect who could plan the project. Nala, son of Viswakarma the civil architect for Heaven, was brought to the site. Nala used his architectural & engineering skills to construct the bridge. He took minute care of gathering proper building materials, aligning the boulders' arrangement over the ocean, systematic transfer of the material to the construction site etc. The result was a strong, easily accessible bridge. Rama was inefficient in building his team and he aptly chose Nala to engineer the bridge.

Encourage team members to identify their skills and make fullest use of them & nourish them continuously: Continuous learning is always a competitive advantage to the team.

Nala, son of Viswakarma the civil architect for Heaven, was brought to the site from where bridge was supposed to be constructed. The bridge construction was not an ordinary job and would require high architectural and engineering skills. Nala was inexperienced though skillful, nobody had given him a chance to prove himself until Rama appointed him for the job. Nala fulfilled the job with high potential and kept Rama's honor. Nala was

Tips on team building

1. *Read on team building activities and try them on your team.*

Selling skills

There is one simple rule to sell a product - Understand in and out of it thoroughly and market it to the customers from their perspective and not from your perspective. Similarly, if you are implementing requirements understand from the requirements owner's perspective and not from your stand point. Until you know what the buyer wants, you do not know what you are selling.

To sell a product one does not have to gain complete command over the product. Learn to quickly get zest of a complicated work and don't get lost in details. This helps in rational thinking and decision making. It requires talent and skill to understand which level of details is sufficient to make appropriate decisions.

Learn how to market your ideas. If you cannot sell your ideas or initiatives, you cannot lead. Do not start with your ideas but with other's problems. Start with what the person wants or dreams about, not with what you have.

Leaders and sales people use two ears and only one mouth. Listen to the customer's voice and grasp what is needed by him. Many a times a customer says something but he actually means something else. The customer may not speak your language and also the customer may not always know the technical jargons that you normally use.

Delegating

Effective delegation frees your time to focus on where you add most value and helps develop skills of your team.

For effective delegation -

- Ensure clarity over task & eventual success criteria. Make sure team understands them.
- Ensure team has skills & resources.
- Be clear on status tracking.
- Be available to help but do not interfere all the time. When they ask for help, ask them to suggest solutions.
- Give interesting tasks that team likes to learn from.
- Show trust in team, praise success and do not undermine team.
- You delegate authority and not responsibility; you are still accountable for outcomes.

Managing expectations

Expectations will be different for different levels of people within the organization. Your higher management might expect you to handle more responsibilities. Like wise, your subordinates might like the idea of handling less number of responsibilities. Both the ends have expectations that you probably do not expect. So to manage expectations play it fast and play it hard.

Set expectations to your team as early as you can. Challenge & change expectations as early as you can.

Underlying principle of expectation management is to raise your expectations on you first in order to exceed other's expectations. That is keep sharpening your axe not just while cutting off tree.

Your success in any business will always be in direct proportion to your ability to consistently exceed expectations of your customers.

Effective expectations management is not only about setting expectations at right level it is also about setting right psychological contract between leader & team member.

There are few sins that bosses find difficult to forgive. In other words leaders do not expect any of the below behaviors from their teams -

- Disloyalty: As this might hinder team's morale.
- Unexpected behavior: For example, taking off without informing.
- Outsmarting bosses: Learn to outsmart without bothering your boss.
- Not delivering reliability: Set proper psychological contract with your boss.

Learning to say 'no'

Say 'no' without appearing negative. When you are asked to take something on and you need time to think then avoid answering and buy time. The result of not saying no is – too many commitments and that will surely stress you out and you would not be able to perform well.

Do not argue opposing an idea. Let other people take the heat for you, only fight the battles you really have to. Ultimate form of resistance is to do nothing.

Conflict management

Different functions, business units, geographies will have different priorities and hence conflicts are inevitable.

Do not take personally and fight emotionally. Blame the situation, not the person. Do not take decisions when discussions are on heat. Buy in time if you have to think over the matter all over and get back with win-win kind of solutions.

Feedback

Hearing feedback: Discovering the truth, watch body language – actions speak louder than the words. Listen to silence, as silence speaks a lot! Be your own boss and evaluate yourself. When you are hearing bad news do not get defensive or aggressive but try to listen objectively.

Giving feedback: Give prompt feedback – positive or negative. Give feedback specific to a purpose. Don't attack the person, attack the problem. Ask questions to see if the person understands the problem. Mutually agree on next steps.

Chapter4: TECHNICAL SKILLS

The following are the technical skills that are covered in this chapter. Observation, problem solving, creativity and innovation, competitive, risk management, task management, decision making, goal management, assumption making, process management, time management, learning, analytical, communication, crisis, energy conservation and vision management.

Observation skills

Observation skills are quite essential as all the information that we need is not always available ready made. We might have all the information handy but scattered, in which case it is not easy to take intelligent decisions.

Here is a focus on observation skills –

1. Meditate on the task at hand; develop observation skills in order to succeed.
2. Learn to see black holes (loop holes) not just the stars (merits).

During the war when Indrajit realized that it is difficult to defeat Rama decided to play trick against him. He brought an illusionary Sita in the battlefield and slashed her to death. Assuming illusion to be reality, Rama almost fainted and all the monkeys lost their confidence. Vibhishana knew Indrajit's tricks and so could easily make out illusion. He convinced everyone that it was not original Sita who was killed. Thus Vibhishana's skill to distinguish between illusion and reality saved emotional defeat of Rama's army.

3. Body language and tone speak a lot than the speech – Team members/managers may not orally or in written tell you that you are wrong.

Rama & Lakshmana reach nearer to Rshymuka hill hoping to make friends with Sugriva. Sugriva, who was residing on Rshymuka hill along with his army, saw them from far and suspected them to be spies of Vali, his king brother. To clear Sugriva's doubts Hanuman, minister of Sugriva, decided to meet Rama & Lakshmana in disguise and find out their intentions. Hanuman assumed a mendicant's form and appeared in front of Rama & Lakshmana and was astonished to see their exalted personalities. He couldn't lie to them and so told who he was and where Sugriva was. Rama observed Hanuman's nature just by his body language and speech, he told to Lakshmana that Hanuman appears to be courteous and that his eyes, attitude, expression are not displeasing and, that he has depth, confidence, intelligence and power. Impressed by Hanuman's nature Rama requested Lakshmana to reveal about their purpose to meet Sugriva. Hanuman was later a crucial in establishing friendship between Rama & Sugriva and in fetching Sita back to Rama.

Exercises to improve observation skills

1. Go to a scenic place and observe every detail of the nature with great enthusiasm
2. Take a beautiful painting of some scenery and observe its details.
3. Read science fiction and detective fiction.

Problem solving skills

If there is a problem, identify it and solve it. Often it is difficult to find if problem exists at all.

The question is - how to find the right problem?

- Focus on causes not symptoms
- Know who can solve
- Create thought through options
- Have approach for problem solving

The other question is – How to solve a problem?

- Understand the problem
- Create hypothesis
- Evaluate & select hypothesis
- Drill down to action planning

The leader focuses on solutions & actions, while everyone else is indulging in an orgy of doubt. And if the solution of a problem demands change, then be ready to change.

Here are few thoughts to leaders on problem solving.

1. Take responsibility on your own; don't be forced to take one. Even if you are supreme and not accountable, jump in and help others.
2. Think beyond to provide feasible solutions.

Narada told Valmiki that Rama thinks beyond the obvious to keep his kingdom misery free. There were no diseases or mental disturbances in the kingdom, no fear of scarcity, thieves or hunger. The entire kingdom was filled with abundant grains, fruits, vegetables and milk products. Rama had the vision of abundance for his kingdom and planned well to get his vision executed. The vision was simple but it had many challenges in the form of natural calamities, weather conditions, etc. Rama even thought beyond to achieve abundance taking enough care to overcome all possible distractions.

3. When solving a problem, entire solution cannot be designed at a stretch even before starting implementation. Rules exist in management but they have to be continuously evaluated. Agile methodology works most of the times.
4. If you are looking for a solution to a problem, seek someone's help who has already solved similar problems or is facing similar problems.

When Rama & Lakshmana were searching for Sita in the forest after she was kidnapped, they happened to meet Kabandha a demigod. Kabandha after hearing what had happened to Sita suggested Rama to approach Sugriva who also had similar problem. The advantage was that both shared same emotional levels and so could help each other solve their individual problems.

5. Attack the problem not its symptoms.

Hanuman was sent to Lanka to find Sita there. After meeting Sita and convincing her that Rama would come soon to rescue her, Hanuman decided to show his power to Ravana. He started destroying one of the gardens in Lanka and tempted Lanka soldiers to capture him. Hanuman's capture was not easy, several soldiers had to die and Indrajit, a son of Ravana had to use a powerful weapon to capture Hanuman. When Hanuman was brought into court of Ravana, Ravana could not control his anger and ordered for Hanuman's slaughter. Vibhishana, younger brother of Ravana then suggested Ravana not to kill messenger of the enemy but to try to kill enemy directly. Vibhishana's message to Ravana was to attack the source of the problem but not its symptoms.

6. Be open to ideas from all, you cannot alone generate all great ideas from various perspectives.

During the battle it was quite difficult to defeat Kumbhakarna, a gigantic younger brother of Ravana. Rama tried his ways of defeating him but couldn't. Lakshmana then gave Rama an idea – As Kumbhakarna is intoxicated from drinking blood he could not discriminate between monkeys and demons so if thousands of monkeys climb over Kumbhakarna's body to out weight him then it would be easy to defeat him. Rama took this idea and immediately implemented it; and so took no time to kill Kumbhakarna.

Rama never assumed himself to be a knower of everything, he was open to ideas from anyone irrespective of their positions and this kind of mind set made him a great leader.

Creativity and innovation skills

Innovation is inevitable in this age of tough competition. If you make a small delay between ideating and materializing the idea, then you have done no less than giving an opportunity for your competitor to win the game! There are so many creativity and innovation tools available for public use. Try them and also design, if required, your own tools that suite your purpose.

Here are few thoughts to leaders on developing these skills.

1. Don't reinvent wheel, do so only if it adds value.
2. Learn to find gaps/mistakes/problems; understanding them means half of the solution worked out. This ability is key to creativity and innovation.
3. Use imagination appropriately. Imagination is more than knowledge in terms of importance.
4. If you are not able to get an opportunity to prove yourself then create your own opportunity.

When Viswamitra was performing severe austerities to gain Brahmashri rank, he was visited by Trisanku. Trisanku a king from Iksvaku dynasty had a desire to reach heaven in his human body. He approached Vasista to express his desire but in vain. Trisanku then approached Vasista's hundred sons who then cursed him for coming to them even after their father turned him down. After this incident Trisanku had no option but to meet Viswamitra who then readily agreed to help him as he was rejected by Vasista. Viswamitra then began to perform sacrifices and invited demigods to accept their share of offerings which they desisted. So Viswamitra directly elevated Trisanku to heaven but was pushed back to earth. Viswamitra could not send Trisanku to heaven so he created a new heaven for Trisanku who then enjoyed the heavenly bliss.

Viswamitra could not give an opportunity to Trisanku to enter Heaven and so he created a new opportunity to Trisanku by giving an entry to new Heaven created by himself.

5. The pleasure of making something on your own (some invention or creation etc) is unmatchable. So try hands on something of your interest, improve your creative skills to the maximum possible extent.
6. Think out of box, imagination is superior to information. In this modern age, information is available in abundance, our ability lies in using our skills of imagination to achieve something big with the available information.

During the war when Indrajit realized that it is difficult to defeat Rama decided to play trick against him. He brought an illusionary Sita in the battlefield and slashed her to death. Had Indrajit simply announced Sita's death nobody in the battlefield would believe him and so he thought out of box to use illusion to affect Rama emotionally. Indrajit had mystic powers but those were more effective only because Indrajit could think out of box.

Competitive skills

The importance of possessing this skill is cannot be debated. Do not keep track of the market and your competition for few months, and you are almost out of the competition!

Here are few suggestions to leaders on developing competitive skills -

1. Estimate your competitor's/opponent's abilities correctly, don't ever underestimate.
2. Keep an eye on your competitors, study their strengths and weakness, predict their next move and act accordingly.
3. Don't let your opponents know your strengths.

Before Rama's army constructed a bridge to reach Lanka, Ravana sent a spy demon called Suka who assumed a bird's form and surveyed the area where Rama's army resided and began estimating their strength. Sugriva identified that the bird was a spy and all the monkeys at once attacked Suka. Few monkeys cut off the bird's wings and beat him savagely. Rama intervened and mercilessly assured that Suka would be set free once they all reached Lanka. Thus, Rama was kind enough but at the same time tactful enough to hide his strengths from his opponent, Ravana.

4. This is a short list of attributes of intelligence that can outstand you in the competition:
 - Inclination to hear others
 - Understand what others have to say
 - Good memory
 - Capacity to reason in favor or against a proposition
 - True wisdom
 - Sense of time and place
 - Firmness
 - Ability to endure all hardships

- Knowledge of subjects
- Expertise
- Ability to guard secrets
- Consistency
- Ability to judge one's own strength
- Appreciation for services rendered by others.

Tara, Angada, Hanuman and other monkeys were sent southwards in search of Sita. They were not able to find Sita and so were deeply disappointed. Tara proposed to remain in accessible cave and fast until death. Angada remained silent as if approving the plan. Hanuman then tried to motivate Angada by reminding Angada of his competitive skills (listed above) and thus could save his fellow mates for a noble cause.

We can use the above list to improve our competitive skills.

5. Ascertain strengths of your opponents and competitors.

When Hanuman reached Lanka and found Sita he decided to show his power to Ravana before leaving Lanka. He wanted to destroy some part of Lanka and then get arrested to meet Ravana as his intention was also to estimate Ravana's strength. Hanuman could estimate Ravana's strength and could back to Rama to help plan for the attack on Lanka.

When Vibhishana approached Rama everyone suspected him to be a spy. But Rama realized that Vibhishana was genuine and so gave him shelter and, also learnt strengths & weaknesses of Ravana from him.

Leaders play crucial role in planning to win over competitors; ascertaining competition is an important step during planning.

6. Develop your capacities to the extent that you are not in loss even after your opponents estimate your strengths.

Suka and Sarana were Ravana's spies who were roaming near Rama's camp to estimate enemy's strengths. Vibhishana caught them and all monkeys started beating them but then Rama mercifully released them. Rama was sure that at that stage when they were all set to fight, there was no point in still maintaining defense secrets.

In today's competitive world, it is not easy to always hide our offerings to our customers, but we can plan to win an edge over competition by offerings that cannot be cloned. IP (patent) blocking is one of the ways to win over the competition.

7. Big or small players should not under estimate their competitors be they small or big.

Before war began Rama sent a message for Ravana through Angada who then flew to Ravana who was sitting atop the northern gate of Lanka palace. Angada delivered Rama's message advising Ravana to surrender and return Sita to Rama. Enraged Ravana ordered his ministers to kill Angada underestimating his abilities. Angada soon jumped over four rakshasas carrying them to top of the palace. Angada then violently kicked roof of the palace causing the top dome to crumble, while Ravana looked helplessly. Angada roared loudly and then returned to Rama. These feats made Ravana foresee his own destruction. Ravana underestimated Angada; this attempt was another step towards failure.

Risk management

Risk, irrespective of its magnitude, is inevitable in any business. There are few risks that can be mitigated and there are few which cannot be resolved in a time frame and so have to be lived with by trading off other aspects of the business.

Here are few ideas for leaders on risk management:

1. Take calculated risks.
2. Accept challenges for the growth of the self and the society.

Viswamitra accepted the impossible challenge of sending Trisanku to heaven alive. We can learn an important lesson from Vishwamitra on accepting challenges.

3. Learn risk management and learn how to manage project's unknown variables.

When Sugriva was sending all his ministers and rest of the army in search of Sita there were many unknowns. They did not know in which direction Sita was taken away, none except Rama & Lakshamana had seen Sita's face, they never knew how many days it would take to search Sita, they knew nothing of the area in which she was captured etc. Sugriva and his chiefs planned the search mission well, eliminated risks one after the other and finally succeeded in the mission.

4. Accept risks but with great caution.

Upon rejecting Vibhishana he approached Rama. Everyone except Rama suspected him to be spy. After exchange of questions Rama realized that Vibhishana had genuinely rejected Ravana and to clarify Sugriva's suspicion Rama assured Sugriva that he could kill rakshasas just by his mere finger tip but he would not deny protection to someone who seeks shelter under him. Saying so he narrated a story thus –

Once there was a hunter who caught a he-pigeon in his trap. Afterward he took rest under a nearby tree. A she-pigeon, the partner of the he-pigeon was residing in that tree and upon seeing that hunter had come to her house, she offered him ample hospitality. She had nothing to feed the hunter; the bird offered him her own flesh to fulfill her obligation to receive a guest.

The message here is to accept risks for a noble cause but with enough caution. We must develop abilities to mitigate risks and in case a risk cannot be mitigated then we should plan to live with it and if that is also not possible then we should search for other means of overriding the risk.

Task management skills

Proper planning and agile execution is instrumental to easy task management. Here are few tips to focus on -

1. If you have bigger task to perform, break it into pieces and attack them one at a time.
2. Don't multitask, do one job at a time.
3. Get organized with your items. It saves lot of energy and time.
4. Make plan considering all edge scenarios.

Rama made proper plan on how to attack demons and quickly explained it to the monkey chiefs. His plan was to march in front of the army, spread monkeys in all directions. As per plan weak monkeys were left behind. He set different monkey chiefs in different directions according to their strengths and according to the probability of attack by demons from specific directions. There was backup plan that allowed help from other monkeys when one monkey is at risk. The idea of choosing trees, stones for weapons also helped monkeys a lot.

Thus Rama considered all possible edge scenarios before making a plan for execution.

5. Plan your success with the resources that you have.

Rama's army wasn't great in comparison with Ravana's army. Ravana's army had powerful demons who were well trained, well equipped and well organized. Rama's army was not well trained in the art of war, they did not even have weapons excepting for boulders, trees, their own claws, teeth. Rama planned for the attack with whatever strengths they had. Nila was asked to attack on Prahasta at the eastern gate of the Lanka's palace, Angada was deployed against Mahaparsva & Mahodara at the southern gate, Hanuman against Indrajit at the western gate, and Lakshmana & Rama to attack Ravana at the northern gate. Sugriva, Jambavan & Vibhishana were to stay in the army's center providing assistance wherever needed. Prior planning allowed making a great combat.

6. Ability to just deliver is not always as important as ability to deliver on time.

Before the war commenced, during the planning phase Sugriva happened to see Ravana sitting atop the northern gate of his palace. Sugriva at once jumped over Ravana and attacked him. They both indulged in arm wrestling for a long time; Ravana realized that he could not defeat Sugriva with mere physical strength so he called upon his mystic powers. Understanding this, Sugriva returned to Rama feeling blissful at having performed such a heroic feat. Rama embraced Sugriva in love remarked that Sugriva was not supposed to make such attack hastily being a king he was not supposed to take such risk without thinking twice about the consequences.

7. Preparation phase is more important than the action phase.

During the war Ravana realized that all his army chiefs and relatives were getting killed one by one. So he requested his son Indrajit to re-enter the battle. Indrajit was already aware of the enemy's strength and so started planning his moves even before entering the battle. As part of the planning phase he also performed sacrifices to increase his potency unlimitedly. Indrajit thus paid more attention to preparation phase as he knew that it was more important than the actual phase of action.

8. One task at a time with focus.

During the combat with Indrajit, Lakshmana was almost frustrated as Indrajit was using mystic powers. Helpless Lakshmana declared that he would invoke brahmasta, a very powerful weapon and destroy all demons at once. But then Rama suggested to attack only one enemy at a time and suggested him not to attack those who are not taking part in the battle. Rama asked Lakshmana to have patience while combating Indrajit and discharge more celestial weapons at him.

9. You may be confident that your method works but to gain others' confidence you will have to test your method. Fail early and learn quickly so that you can succeed and deliver promptly.

After the battle ended with Ravana's death, Rama requested Hanuman to bring her in front of him. When Sita appeared in front of Rama, he did not accept her and instead told that she is now free to go anywhere. This unexpected response from her husband deeply hurt Sita and she decided to sacrifice her life by jumping into fire. She requested Hanuman to make arrangements and when she enters into fire, agni the fire god brings her back without even a small scar. This proves to the world that Sita was pure as ever. Rama knew about her purity but then he had to be harsh towards her so that the world would know about her purity. Infact, Ravana kidnapped maya sita - an illusionary Sita created by her mother, the earth. When maya-Sita jumps into fire, original Sita is brought back by agni in order for her to get united with Rama. Rama was confident about Sita but to gain other's confidence, he had to demand Sita to enter into fire.

10. Women should always be protected.

Ramayana teaches us this important lesson.

11. When you start a new task, we are often clueless as to how to proceed. Keep going and all unknown will get revealed as and when required.

Decision making skills

Three foundations that leaders use to make decisions – rational short cuts, emotional interests & politics

Rational short cuts –

- a) Habit – something that worked before
- b) Credibility of person presenting idea
- c) Anchoring

Emotional interests –

An effective leader will work out all emotional & personal challenges in private and in advance of any formal decision making meeting.

Politics – process, control & priorities

Here are few tips on developing decision making skills -

1. Learn to understand your supervisors and your sub-ordinates, your peers, clients and team members. To understand can be a very important source of information in decision making.
2. History of a place, person or a thing is very important in decision making.
3. Don't be fickle minded and make hasty conclusions; conclude only after careful considerations.

When Rama & Lakshmana arrived near foot of Rsyamuka hill where Sugriva resided, Sugriva observed them from far and suspected them to be spies sent by his brother Vali. He made such a hasty conclusion as he was a fickle minded monkey. Later he cleared all his doubts. Hanuman then disguised himself to find out Rama & Lakshmana's intentions. Hanuman made careful considerations and then concluded that they were in fact well-wishers of Sugriva.

Here Hanuman teaches us a lesson to make conclusions only after careful considerations.

4. Wrong decision making can collapse business.

Ravana made a direct combat with Rama only during the final phase of the battle. As per the updates that Ravana received about the war until then, Rama undoubtedly had the upper hand. It was not a battle that Ravana could win, he would have saved his kingdom and his life if he had wisely returned Sita and asked for apology. But Ravana could not do that out of self-respect and knowingly made the wrong decision of facing Rama. The result was that he had to give up his life and kingdom to Rama.

Goal management skills

Personal and professional goals management is the key for success. Develop your own mechanism to track long term and short term goals.

Here are few topics for focus -

1. One step at a time: short & realistic goals.
2. Work smart keeping long term goals in view without compromising on short term goals.
3. Think from different angles (perspectives) in finding possible solutions to a problem. For ex: customer perspective, business perspective, engineering perspective.

After nectar was produced by churning ocean, as per rule it had to be shared among demigods and demons. But if demons consumed nectar they would become immortal. To save the world lord Vishnu, the supreme godhead predicted what would happen if demons were denied of nectar and so assumed a lady form called Mohini and attracted demons by his charm. Demons were tactically fooled to allow all nectar to demigods. Vishnu could foresee the problem with demons, he could think of possible solutions, and he could finally execute his plan to keep away demons from consuming nectar.

4. Keep a track of progress in your goal by regularly measuring it through sensors.
5. Keep challenging your self and keep meeting your targets.

Viswamitra is the best example for this. He kept challenging himself and meditated for several years. He had to face distractions several times by each time he challenged himself to final meet his target of getting the rank of Brahmarsi. Viswamitra teaches us a lesson to grow continuously by challenging ourselves each time.

6. Process (act or think) your goal while eating, sleeping, working or relaxing; this way you are sure to reach your goal.

7. Set roadmap and provide vision for each milestone.

Before the monkeys were set on search mission, Rama provided vision – It was to locate abode of Ravana and ascertain whether Sita is still alive. Sugriva was to organize search parties. The road map for them was then to be determined based on the search results. Sugriva then cascaded this vision to a monkey king Vanda – Vanda and his soldiers were to search in eastern direction, including oceans and islands. Vanda was set to this mile stone of searching in eastern direction in one month and report back. Similarly Sugriva dispatched Angada, Nila, Hanuman, Jambhavan and others to the south making Angada, the son of Nila leader of this party. The southern party got corresponding instructions and were set goal to report back findings in a month. Similarly two more parties were set to go in rest two directions. The next milestones for each of the parties were to be set based on the outcome of the first milestone.

8. How dedicated you are towards your goal determines your victory. Big accomplishments are achieved by taking small steps.

When monkeys were constructing the bridge to Lanka over the ocean using boulders, a small squirrel was also attempting to contribute for the cause by pushing small sand into the ocean. The squirrel teaches an important lesson to us. We begin with small steps and they often might seem negligible in terms of accomplishment but these are the small steps one after the other that would lead to a big accomplishment as no big success is obtained just at one go.

9. Leader's vision should align to subordinate's vision and vice-versa only then everyone would remain as a team fighting against the odds.

All the monkeys in Rama's army were dedicated to Rama's vision of finding Sita and rescuing her. The monkeys were so dedicated that none hesitated to sacrifice its life; they never cared for sleep, food or water. The demons on the Ravana's side had the luxury of attacking Rama's army one after the other. The demons had the chance to take proper rest by going back to the palace. Despite of no much comfort, the monkeys remained on Rama's side as their personal goals were aligned to Rama's vision; they all wanted to be party of a noble cause and also remain in history for serving the supreme godhead. Also note that none of the monkeys were threatened by Rama to remain in the mission. But Ravana had threatened several of his followers to fight against Rama; few of the Ravana's followers never liked the idea of kidnapping a lady and then bring entire kingdom to stake.

10. Short term goals should lead you to long term goals. Success is not achieved in one step but in series of steps; it demands patience and consistency.

When we observe the war, Rama's war style was different to that of Ravana's. Ravana sent his army chiefs one after the other to the battle field based on the ascending order of their capabilities. Ravana was confident that each of his army chiefs were individually capable of winning the war. Ravana's strategy to take one step after the other to achieve the goal of defeating the enemy was excellent, but he was defeated because his intentions were wrong and he made wrong decisions mostly clouded by his false pride.

11. Give affirmations to your sub-conscious mind and you will start towards your goal and you will get help from various sources automatically as you progress in your accomplishment.

Rama was so strong in his determination that he kept moving with progress towards his accomplishment. He finally succeeded in what he wanted. Initially when Sita was kidnapped, he had no followers except Lakshmana. In a short time he made friends with Sugriva and got millions of monkey followers. Rama had to face challenges at every stage but he kept moving. It might seem that it all happened just like that and there is no great deal in this. Most of us face a problem – we wanted to do something but do not do it and our fate is driven by external forces, we do not seem to have control over it. We try to find lot of excuses for not achieving what we want. We call this procrastination; it is mostly because of lack of clarity on what we want and lack of inner urge for accomplishment. We can develop strong inner urge to achieve what we want through change in habits. We must first identify those habits that are blocking our progress and then change them in our favor. This is possible by programming sub-conscious mind using strong positive affirmations.

Assumption

Don't assume too many things and construct your own theory out of pure imagination. Research, practically test your theory and only then apply it.

Process management skills

If you make a mistake, accept it and then establish a process that ensures that such mistakes or its kind do not repeat. Don't keep mistakes to yourself let them be known to the concerned and fix them.

After Sugriva got back his kingdom due to Rama, he started leading a luxurious life. For four months Sugriva did not get back to Rama; he had even neglected to fulfill the obligation of managing the state of administration. Rama got frustrated by Sugriva's behavior and on Rama's behalf Lakshmana went to Sugriva's palace to warn of the consequences of his negligence. Sugriva then realized his mistakes and immediately ordered all his monkeys to summon to help Rama. Sugriva teaches us to learn from mistakes; additionally we should also be able to set processes, either manual or automatic, which empower us to avoid repetition of the mistakes.

No process can work right all the time, so processes require constant change and the periodicity depends on usage, importance of the process, flexibility of the process and several other aspects.

Time management skills

Don't waste time on low priority tasks. Learn to manage time. Learn to utilize free time/relaxation time effectively.

Learn to overcome attractive distractions.

Quick execution is better than delayed and well planned them on paper.

Handle each paper/email only once.

Do it right first time.

Keep clear desk for clear mind.

Decide what you really want and need to do.

Find out what you actually do.

Create your prioritized to-do list for that day and follow it.

Learning skills

As we rise through an organization, the demands & expectations on us change. We cannot stand still and let the world run ahead of us.

Leadership skills are know-how skills and not know-what skills. They are learned from mix of experience, bosses, peers & role models and not from books or courses. We learn from negative & positive examples.

Reading and observation skills:

- Reading socially is different from reading on business.
- Understand how to read a book or someone's mind as per need.
- Teach to learn.
- Learn from autobiographies.
- Keep abreast with the knowledge in the areas of your interest.
- Keep good relations. Learn from others. Many are living books. Hands on experience is the best way of learning, if that is not possible, learn from others' experiences.
- Learn from news and current affairs.
- Self-realization is a very important aspect of education.
- Keep the company of one learned man rather than thousands of ignorant fools.
- Real knowledge leads to self realization whereas one who lives only for the senses pleasure becomes a slave to uncontrolled lust and greed.
- How to acquire knowledge & expertise? Keep searching for it. Your passion is the true measure - example Hanuman was chosen for the important mission of finding Sita, Rama gave him his ring as a mark of identification.

Analytical skills

Analysis can be a proactive or a reactive activity. If you are performing postmortem of an event then it is reactive, if you are able to analyze an event even before it occurs then it is proactivity.

Develop ability to analyze an event.

Vibhishana was the only one in Lanka who identified the root cause of all miseries that started moving Lanka from the day Sita was kidnapped. He could analyze the situation based on the Hanuman's visit to Lanka and also based on Rama's messages sent through Angada demanding for return of Sita. He could stitch the series of events that occurred after Sita was captured and predicted Ravana's down fall. But Ravana was clouded by ego and could not analyze the whole situation properly. Ravana blindly abandoned Vibhishana and accepted unfavorable war with Rama.

Analytical skills are extremely important in understanding a situation and in making next move as appropriate.

Don't assume, when in doubt ask, or build a quick prototype and make proper analysis on that basis.

When Vibhishana arrived at Rama's camp after abandoning his brother's kingdom, no one except a few like Rama, Hanuman believed in Vibhishana. They did not have time to test Vibhishana. The only way they could find out Vibhishana's intentions was to question him and judge based on his body language and speech. In this context, Rama did not assume anything about Vibhishana instead he analyzed him properly and found him to be useful.

Communication skills

Writing skills:

- Write for the reader
- Tell a story
- Keep it simple
- Make it active
- Support assertions with facts

Presenting:

- Logos or logic (why should listener listen? Then conclude appropriately)
- Ethos (build credibility fast, why should I believe this person?)
- Pathos (Tell a story and relate your message to their needs & experience, facts & logic are not enough)

Presentation style – energy, enthusiasm, excitement

Tips

- Throw away the script
- Avoid complicated slide presentations
- Engage the audience
- Rehearse

Story telling:

- A good story is memorable and has emotional intensity that no amount of facts or arguments can achieve. Contents of a good story –
- Meaning & relevance to your audience
- Storyline (beginning, journey, ending)
- Emotional impact on audience
- Authenticity

Listening skills:

Respect others' view point don't get into monotonous thinking mode. Ask questions, that's quicker way to understand something (concept, process etc) and to knowledge sharing.

Before Valmiki began his work on Ramayana Narada happens to visit him. Valmiki asks Narada a lot of questions for the well being of the mankind. The questions were thus – who is the most accomplished, learned, noble-minded, powerful and truthful? Who possesses flawless character and engages himself in genuine welfare of all living entities? Etc. Narada then narrates Valmiki about Rama. This inspires Valmiki to write the epic Ramayana.

If you are deaf to genuine advices then you are sure to loose.

Ravana received noble advices several times by several of his followers against his evil intentions of possessing Sita. He was advised by Marica not to kidnap Sita. He was advised by Vibhishana to return Sita to Rama. He was advised by his spies who were mercifully saved by Rama from not being killed by monkeys to return Sita. Ravana was deaf to all these genuine advices and finally lost his life and kingdom.

Let team discover what to do and how to improve. Let them discover answers to their problems, this enables them to have ownership, commitment and learn skills, processes.

Effective listening –

- a) paraphrasing – summarize your understanding before ending a meeting
- b) ask open questions – interactive
- c) debriefing – outside meeting, issues, roles, body language, your own performance, next steps

Negotiations:

Fundamental principles of effective negotiations –

- a) Win-win
- b) Focus on interests, not on positions

Networking:

Break the ice, engage, enthuse, and enquire
Let people talk about their favorite subject: themselves
Networking starts with the heart not the head.
Build effective networking – Take care not to mistake alliances and business networks for friendship.

Effective meetings:

What did I learn?
What did I contribute?
What do I do next?
If executives do not know answers to these questions, they are in wrong meeting & possibly in the wrong job.

Crisis management

This starts long before a crisis happens and recognizes questions – what, where, who, when, why it will happen.

Prevention

Legal – employment, discrimination, product liability, confidentiality
Criminal – fraud, theft, terrorism, violence, denial-of-service attack
Health & safety – working practices, product contamination
Technical – data loss, power loss, water loss, IT sys crash
Operational – loss of service, production, key staff
Financial – takeover threat, receivables
Market – loss of key contracts, customers, suppliers

Preparation & practice of crisis management includes decision making clarity & communications.

Prompt response – communicating that crisis is being addressed
Professional response – appear calm, collected & committed
Positive response – Make team to respond to regain control and also to find out root cause
Proactive response – Come up with a plan as fast as possible and keep modifying as & when required.

Managing adversity: Inaction, depression or seeking to blame people are not recipes for success or recovery.

Energy conservation

Leader of modern times have a responsibility to save earth. They must make sure that their organizations are not harming our environment.

Go green – use green energy, plant trees as much as possible. This will also inspire employees to remain closer to mother nature.

Make use of solar energy, wind energy and other forms of green energy to the extent possible. This will also help in reduce bills paid for electricity.

Vision management

Vision for teams: goals, roles, how to get there together?
This is required as people want to know that are doing something worthwhile, that their contribution is important and that success is possible.

Vision for whole organization – relevant, unique, stretching, simple. If a vision statement is not simple it will not be remembered.

Conclusion

This book makes an attempt to touch base upon most of the important skills required by modern day leaders. Ramayana epic has implicit reference to most of these skills through various characters that appear in it. This book makes an attempt to set such reference from Ramayana for each of the leadership skills.

The exercises that are available under each section provide a useful source of information to master leadership skills.

Appendix

Below is the list of characters from Ramayana that appear in this book.

CHARACTER	ROLE IN RAMAYANA
Agastya Risi	One of the priests of king Dasharatha in Ayodhya.
Angadha	Son of monkey king Vali
Atikaya	Son of Ravana
Bharata	Son of Dasharatha and younger brother of Rama
Brahma	One of the Trimurthis
Dasharatha	King of Ayodhya, father of Rama
Hanuman	Minister of monkey king Sugriva, follower of Rama
Indra	King of heaven
Indrajit	Son of Ravana
Jambhavan	Minister of monkey king Sugriva
Kaikeyi	Youngest wife of king Dasharatha, mother of Bharatha and step – mother of Rama, Lakshmana
Kamadhenu	Cow from heaven
Kumbha	Son of Kumbhakarna
Kumbhakarna	Younger brother of Ravana
Lakshmana	Younger brother of Rama
Lava, Kusha	Twin sons of Rama & Sita
Manthara	Maid servant of Kaikeyi
Matali	Charioteer of Indra
Maya Sita	Illusionary Sita kidnapped by Ravana
Nala	Son of Viswakarma
Narada	Son of Brahma and devotee of Vishnu
Nila	A monkey chief under king Sugriva
Parasurama	Sixth avatar of Vishnu before Rama avatar
Rama	Seventh avatar of Vishnu
Ravana	Demon king of Lanka
Sita	Daughter of Janaka, wife of Rama
Siva	One of the Trimurthis
Sugriva	Monkey king and brother of Vali
Suka, Sarana	Spies of king Ravana
Susena	A monkey warrior under Sugriva
Trisanku	A king who seeks help from Vishwamitra to reach Heaven
Vali	Monkey king, elder brother of Sugriva
Valmiki	A Risi and author of Ramayana
Vasista	A Brahmarshi and court priest of Ayodhya
Vibhishana	A younger brother of Ravana
Vishnu	One of the Trimurthis
Vishwamitra	A Brahmarshi, teacher to Rama & Lakshmana
Viswakarma	A civil architect for heaven

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